

The True Cost of Gigging

How much is my time really worth?

Before you quote \$75 to play for that 30 minute event, take a few minutes to consider what you have invested in the harp and what all it will take to play for those 30 short minutes. Not everything here will apply, but most of it likely will.

1. Costs not directly tied to gigging

These costs are what you had to invest to become a harpist. While some of these costs may not be applicable to you, you should consider how much you have spent over the years on those that are applicable.

- * Harp lessons
- * Harp(s)
- * Sheet music, binders, dividers
- * iPad, Bluetooth pedal
- * Strings
- * Harp repairs and regulations
- * Bench
- * Music stand
- * Tuning key, electronic tuner
- * Gig/string bag, wire cutters
- * Transport cover
- * Other accessories
- * Conferences, workshops, masterclasses
- * College and certification programs
- * Harpmobile
- * Performance outfits, shoes
- * Pickups and amplification equipment
- * Dolly
- * Harp insurance
- * Music reading and arranging software
- * Memberships to associations (AHS, ISFHC, ASCAP, ...)

2. Costs associated with gigs

These costs differentiate a gigging harpist from an amateur harp student. Many of these costs are gig-specific, while others apply to all gigs.

- * Advertising
- * Bridal fairs and other paid vendor events
- * Flyers, business cards
- * Website



- * Lead generation sites
- * Online payment processing fees
- * Commissions
- * Music purchases for special requests
- * Fuel
- * Tolls/ferries
- * Parking/valet
- * Hotels
- * Flights
- * Food
- * Dryclean performance outfit
- * Event liability insurance

3. Costs of gigging difficult to assign specific monetary value

If time is money, these costs should be included when considering a gig's worth. Consider also things that will need to be replaced over time.

- * Wear and tear on harpmobile
- * Wear and tear on harp
- * Wear and tear on performance outfits/shoes
- * Consult time to book gig/plan/contract
- * Researching music requests/listening to YouTube versions
- * Searching for sheet music/adapting piano music/creating arrangements
- * Practice music
- * Extra practice for special requests you will never play again
- * Rehearsals and coordinating with other musicians
- * Time spent getting dressed up/hair/makeup
- * Packing up harp and equipment
- * Drive time
- * Set up/tuning time
- * Playing time
- * Down time between playing
- * Packing up
- * Uploading/set up at home
- * Lost opportunities during the time spent on the gig
- * Time spent advertising/quoting/following up on leads that don't book
- * Social media posting, recording and posting samples
- * Follow up - thank you, review requests, photo requests, overtime payment arrangements, resolving any issues, social media posting

Respect yourself and the musician profession and charge a minimum for every gig, no matter how short the performance time is.

